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May 23, 2007

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **SYPHILIS AND OTHER STD CONTROL EFFORTS**

On June 13, 2006, the Board approved a motion by Supervisors Yaroslavsky and Molina to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy directed at prevention and intervention of syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

In late June, I provided you with a draft report for consideration in the budget deliberations. During July and August 2006, we refined the plan in consultation with the Board offices. On September 20, 2006, I provided the Board offices with the final report with a comprehensive strategy, media campaign, budget and timeline. On September 26, 2006, as part of the supplemental budget, the Board approved funding of \$700,000 provided by Supervisor Yaroslavsky's funds for this fiscal year. Combined with the \$500,000 in one-time savings identified by the Department, we had enough funding to begin implementation of the project. Status reports were provided to the board on November 20, 2006, February 5, 2007, February 27, 2007 and April 16, 2007.

This is to provide you with a status report with particular attention to the social marketing component.

SOCIAL MARKETING PLAN

On March 13, 2007, the Board approved an agreement with Fraser Communications to implement the social marketing component of this plan.

Background and Accomplishments To Date

1. Community Advisory Groups (CAGs):

Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) CAG: The most recent meeting of the MSM CAG was held on May 10, 2007 at the STD Program. The meeting was attended by representatives of three community agencies. All 46 members of the MSM CAG email list also received email copies of several documents for review and comment, including a list of baseline (pre-launch) survey venues on April 13, a report on the five MSM Focus Groups conducted in April by Fraser Communications on April 23, and a Strategic Recommendation Report prepared by Fraser on April 26. All 46 members of the MSM CAG email list also received a meeting reminder notice on May 7, and some follow up calls were made the week of May 7 to encourage CAG attendance.

At the May 10 CAG meeting, representatives from Fraser provided a review of the Focus Group findings and Fraser's Strategic Recommendations for the campaign as well as a presentation of four prototype campaign concepts for comments by attending CAG members. The group gave feedback on all concepts. The CAG will be notified by email of the selected concept prior to the campaign's June 4 launch, and will be asked for additional feedback on provisional creative executions of the concept. The STD Program has also created a dedicated page for CAG members to access meeting information and topical data and materials:
<http://www.lapublichealth.org/std/msm~cag.htm>.

Women of Color CAG: The most recent meeting of the Women of Color CAG was held on May 9, 2007 at South Health Center. The meeting was attended by representatives of five community agencies, with representation from both African American and Latina communities. In addition, five additional agencies that serve Latinas were actively recruited to participate in the CAG. All of the approximately 80 members of the Women of Color CAG email list also received email copies of several documents for review and comment, including a list of baseline survey venues on April 25, a report on the seven Women of Color Focus Groups conducted in April by Fraser Communications on April 25, and the Strategic Recommendation Report prepared by Fraser as discussed previously on April 26.

CAG members also received a meeting reminder notice on May 7, and some follow-up calls were made the week of May 7 to encourage CAG attendance. At the May 9 CAG meeting, representatives from Fraser provided a review of the Focus Group findings and Fraser's Strategic Recommendations for the campaign, and presented the same four prototype campaign concepts as were presented to the MSM CAG. The group gave feedback on all concepts. Group members expressed interest in having another in-person meeting prior to the campaign launch on June 4 to review provisional executions of the selected concept. A meeting was therefore scheduled for May 23, 2007. The STD Program has also created a dedicated page for CAG members to access meeting information and topical data and materials:
<http://www.lapublichealth.org/std/woc~cag.htm>.

2. Formative Research (i.e., Focus Groups):

Fraser Communications conducted a total of 13 focus groups to help develop the two social marketing campaigns (for Women of Color and MSM). Eight groups with women were conducted during April 3, 4, 11, and 12, which included two groups of African-American women ages 18-20, and one group each of African-American women ages 21-24, Latina women English speakers ages 18-20, Latina women English speakers ages 21-24, Latina women Spanish speakers ages 18-20, and Latina women Spanish speakers ages 21-24. Due to low attendance, the group with younger Latina English speakers was repeated. Five groups with MSM were conducted during March 28 and April 2, which included one group each of HIV-negative English speakers ages 25-29, HIV-negative English speakers ages 30-49, HIV-positive English speakers ages 30-49, HIV-negative English speakers ages 25-29, HIV-negative Spanish speakers ages 30-49, and HIV-positive Spanish speakers ages 30-49.

Reports on the focus groups were provided by Fraser Communications to the STD Program on April 20, 2007. One particular area of interest in the MSM groups was the possibility of continuing the Stop the Sores campaign, which was implemented in 2002-2005. This campaign generated unaided recall in all five MSM focus groups, underscoring the very high campaign awareness found in the evaluation surveys of Stop the Sores. In general, however, the focus group participants expressed strong interest in a new campaign. Consequently, the idea of continuing the Stop the Sores campaign was dropped from consideration.

3. Process Measures and Monitoring:

One process measure has been developed and implemented to monitor the impact of the campaign. The number of lab specimens processed by the Department's Public Health Lab for syphilis, chlamydia and gonorrhea screening will be tracked. An increase will indicate more MSM and Women of Color being screened.

4. Baseline Evaluation:

Evaluation questionnaires and methods were developed March-May by the STD Program and Fraser Communications. The STD Program collaborated with the HIV Epidemiology Program in April to adapt a highly rigorous method developed by CDC for sampling MSM known as time-space sampling. A list of locations for interviewing MSM was also finalized and randomized by the STD Program. It was determined that a comparable method could not be used for women, due to the unavailability of a suitable list of pre-screened time-space sampling locations in LAC. Therefore, a new list of high-traffic locations for regular convenience sampling of Latina and African-American women ages 18-25 was developed in April and May by the Women of Color CAG, Fraser and the STD Program. The survey methods and questionnaires were reviewed with Fraser and their data collection subcontractor (May 8).

A County Institutional Review Board exemption was obtained in May for these surveys, on grounds of not constituting research under the code of Federal Regulation. Both the MSM and women's surveys are currently underway in the field, with the goal of collecting 200 completed MSM questionnaires and 300 completed questionnaires with women (150 African American and 150 Latina) prior to the June 4 launch date for both campaigns. The results from these baseline (pre-launch) surveys will be compared with results from surveys to be completed in 2008, after the campaigns have had sufficient time to impact knowledge and testing behaviors of the target populations.

5. Campaign Development, Implementation and Campaign-Linked Outreach:

Based on the findings from the 13 focus groups, Fraser developed a set of strategic recommendations to guide the two campaigns. These recommendations were presented to STD Program staff at a meeting on April 25, and shared with MSM and Women of Color CAG members on April 26. For both groups, the basic Strategic Recommendations included emphasizing the potential serious consequences of specific STDs, of asking for specific STD tests (not assuming a doctor is performing these tests), and conveying that STD testing is fundamental to current and future health. With feedback from CAG members and the STD Program, Fraser used this overarching strategic framework to develop six possible campaign concepts. The six concepts were reviewed by STD Program staff on May 9, and four were selected for review by the Women of Color and MSM CAGs at meetings held on May 9 and 10, respectively, and by additional focus groups which were held on May 14-16. Fraser is currently developing ideas for campaign-linked outreach, which was found to be a successful and important element of Stop the Sores. Additionally, the STD Program will also use a previously and separately funded outreach collaboration with Emmis Radio Corporation, the owner of Power 106 radio, to support outreach for the Women of Color campaign during June-August 2007. This campaign will include 60 outreach events in targeted areas. The STD Program will work with Fraser and Emmis to coordinate these outreach efforts with the Women of Color media campaign.

Next Steps:

Campaign Development: Six focus groups were held the week of May 14 to select the one or two campaign concepts to be implemented in the two campaigns. Fraser and the STD Program are finalizing the selection of the final campaign concepts which will be prepared for your review. Fraser will commence developing campaign materials for launch, planning launch publicity, and will ensure that baseline survey data collection is completed prior to June 4 with the goal of launching both campaigns on June 4, 2007.

Campaign Funds: Current available funding for the two campaigns is for the 2006-07 fiscal year only. A social marketing campaign must have sufficient intensity and duration to yield a lasting impact. Therefore, it is critical that Year 2 of the STD control plan presented to the Board on September 20, 2006 be approved and fully funded as soon as possible.

CASE FINDING AND TREATMENT

Hiring continues for the following 11 positions:

- **1 Public Health Investigator Manager** (began work 2/1/07)
- **5 Public Health Investigators** (5 selected, 1 declined position and interviews pending; 4 staff began work on 3/6/07, 3/27/07, 3/28/07 and 4/2/07)
- **3 Community Services Counselors/Community Workers** (2 Community Workers were selected and offered the position and both candidates accepted. LiveScans were completed on 4/10/07 and 4/18/07 with results pending. Plans to complete interviews for the Community Services Counselor by 5/31/07)
- **1 Research Analyst III**, Internet Interventions (began work 2/27/07)
- **1 Student Professional Worker** (interview date to follow)

Community PHIs:

As previously reported, two agencies with a minimum of 100 early syphilis cases per year were selected [LA Gay and Lesbian Center and AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF)].

The STD Program continues to work with the LA Gay and Lesbian Center and AHF to refine the scope of work for the contract amendment and plans to have documents ready for DPH contracts and grants by May 31, 2007. The Office of AIDS Programs and Policy (OAPP) will begin contract augmentations for several HIV Counseling and Testing contractors to enhance syphilis screening efforts. OAPP and the STD Program have developed a list of OAPP- funded community based organizations that would benefit from Phlebotomy Technician I training. The STD Program continues to work on contract language that will increase the number of community based organizations that enroll staff who have successfully completed phlebotomy technician training and to increase the number of OAPP-funded community based organizations that have at least one certified phlebotomy technician on staff.

I will provide you with another report in 30 days. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:js
PH:606:015-10

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors